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Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Tokelau

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

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I. General

1. Tokealu,[1] a Non-Self-Governing Territory administered by New Zealand, consists of three small atolls in the South Pacific (Nujunonu, Fakaofo and Atafu). Samoa, 480 kilometres to the south, is the nearest sizeable neighbour.

2. Tokelauans are Polynesians with linguistic, family and cultural links to Samoa. Further general information on Tokelau is contained in previous working papers prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.109/2050 and A/AC.109/2090).

II. Constitutional political developments

A. Constitutional developments

3. It will be recalled that according to information provided by the administering Power (A/AC.109/1193, paras. 3-26; A/AC.109/2022, paras. 5-7; A/AC.109/2050, paras. 2-10; and A/AC.109/2090, para. 3) and the report of the Visiting Mission (A/AC.109/2009), the process of constitutional development is continuing. A first draft of the Constitution of Tokelau that was presented to the National Assembly in 1997 and subsequently referred back to the villages and the relevant subcommittees of Tokelau's Special Constitutional Committee for refinement has not yet been presented for a second time.

4. Two publications related to constitutional development appeared in October 1997. The first was a one-volume collection of the laws of Tokelau, designed to improve Tokelau's access to the existing law and facilitate the proper use of the legislative power granted to the Territory under the Tokelau Amendment Act 1996. The second was a two-part report, entitled "Elements of the Constitution", stemming from Tokelau's work since 1995 on a future Constitution. It incorporates the first report of the Special Constitution Committee of the General *Fono*, which was in Tokelauan, and provides an English translation.

5. The constitutional development agenda was discussed in Wellington in November/December 1997 with Tokelauan officials and the *Ulu-o-Tokelau* (head of the Council of *Faipule* and the highest authority of Tokelau). Consideration is being given to the possibility that in the meantime Tokelau might implement certain ideas developed by the Special Constitution Committee relating, for example, to the structure of the General *Fono*. Also discussed was an outline legislative programme for the period 1997-2000.

B. Public service

6. Information on Tokelau's public service is contained in previous working papers (A/AC.109/2022, paras. 9 and 10, and A/AC.109/2050, paras. 9 and 10). It will be recalled that the Tokelau Public Service currently has six departments, two on each atoll, while the seventh, the Office of the Council of *Faipule*, moves each year, *reflecting the rotation of the office of the* Ulu-o-Tokelau. However, it is being increasingly recognized that in its present form the Tokelau Public Service reflects an external model not well suited to the trend towards development of a national governing capacity where political control comes collectively from the villages. According to the administering Power, the challenge for Tokelau now is to devise a structure tailored to its own cultural context and needs in its present phase of constitutional development.

7. Reflecting the current constitutional evolution of Tokelau, it has been planned for some time for the New Zealand State Services Commissioner, who is the employing authority of the Tokelau Public Service, to withdraw from this role. This would require the repeal of the relevant New Zealand legislation (the Tokelau Amendment Act 1967, part I).

III. Economic and social conditions

8. Detailed information on economic conditions in Tokelau is contained in previous working papers (A/AC.109/1193, 2022, 2050 and 2090) and in the report of the Visiting Mission (A/AC.109/2009).

9. Tokelau's exclusive economic zone has been the most significant natural resource contributor to the national budget through the Forum Fisheries Agency. Tokelau's share of the sixth licensing period under the terms of the Treaty on Fisheries with the United States of America was 705,496 United States dollars in 1994. The Treaty will continue to be a source of revenue (though fluctuating from year to year) to the Territorial Government as long as it remains valid. Fisheries are probably Tokelau's most valuable natural resource.

10. According to the draft 1996 census, over the preceding 10 years, owing to continued migration, Tokelau's population had decreased by about 180 people and had reached its lowest level in 50 years. The Territory enjoys a relatively high standard of living, with no visible signs of poverty or gender inequality. Traditional and communal values and practices play a key role in contributing to a state

of general well-being and equity, as evidenced by the redistributive principles of traditional wealth (the *inati* system) and the importance attached to upholding the concept of the family and/or the extended family. The tradition of *inati* requires the deposition of food and produce at a central location, from which they are then apportioned by the distributors on the basis of "share groups". The principle provides for a secure distribution system that caters to the needs of every member of the community, including the elderly, widows, single parents and children.

11. In 1996, the authorities began a review designed to recommend a framework for economic development over the next 10 years aimed at ensuring the continuing viability of life in Tokelau and developing a greater measure of political autonomy and economic self-sufficiency. It was hoped that conditions in Tokelau would thus be of a sufficient quality to retain local residents and to attract migrant Tokelauans to return and develop their country.

12. Formal talks between New Zealand Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) and Tokelau on the future direction of development aid were initiated in Tokelau in February 1996. It was agreed that ODA should remain focused on telecommunications and transportation. Although the importance of adequate transportation for Tokelau's further development has been recognized, and despite the fact that this sector receives the largest single allocation from the Tokelau budget and ODA and that a second vessel has been acquired, the situation remains unsatisfactory and requires further improvement.

13. Regarding United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) activities in Tokelau, it plans to support sustainable human development through the promotion of good governance and capacity-building and through the promotion of job creation and sustainable livelihoods through village-based entrepreneurial development.

14. An up-to-date international telephone service that cost 4 million New Zealand dollars was inaugurated in April 1997. The telephone system, which also allows for access to the Internet, is expected to contribute to the Territory's progress towards self-determination by facilitating Tokelau's contact with the outside world. Previously, Tokelau had to rely on short wave links to Western Samoa and a mail ship that visited every five weeks. Of the total cost, New Zealand contributed $NZ 1.5 million, and Tokelau $NZ 1.6 million. UNDP and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) provided the balance.

15. Women are well-integrated in Tokelauan society. They participate fully in the village decision-making process through women's committees, the Village Councils of Elders and their membership in the General *Fono*.

16. Under Tokelau's compulsory education system, primary and secondary education is available to everyone. However, the low standard of the education system remains a problem, with many families migrating to New Zealand or Samoa in order for their children to receive higher-quality education.

17. Average life expectancy is 65 to 70 years, and there is easy access to health clinics. However, the shortage of qualified medical practitioners, surgeons and general health-care workers remains a serious problem on all of the atolls. A large amount of national expense is incurred because of the need to transfer the more serious cases to Samoa or New Zealand for treatment.

IV. Future status of the Territory

A. Position of the administering Power

18. On 9 October 1997, during the general debate on decolonization issues in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), including the question of Tokelau, the representative of the administering Power said that it made little sense for the United Nations to set a decolonization timetable that ignored the realities confronting the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. The situation in which Tokelau found itself was different from the pattern traditionally considered by the Special Committee. Had that not been the case, there would have been a temptation to use one of the known governmental models, and not to begin from basics. Tokelau had to find an alternative route to development, drawing upon its own tradition, developing its own ideas in its own language and setting its own timetable for self-determination. Tokelau had reached what looked to be a defining point in its constitutional journey. A first report, in Tokelauan, on the content of a future Constitution had been made at the end of 1996. In September 1997, Tokelau's legal adviser had produced, with UNDP funding, a dual-language report and a collection of the laws of Tokelau, which would facilitate the proper use of the legislative power gained by the General *Fono* in 1996. Another important focus was the drive to recover traditional village authority, concentrating on capacity-building in the villages, in which there was still a shortage of the human and organizational skills required (see A/C.4/52/SR.4)

B. Position of the people of Tokelau

19. The issue of self-determination is under active consideration by the people of Tokelau, who have expressed a strong preference for a status of free association with New Zealand (see A/AC.109/2009 and A/AC.109/2050).

V. Action by the General Assembly

20. On 10 December 1997, the General Assembly adopted resolution 52/77 B, a consolidated resolution on 12 Non-Self-Governing Territories, section X of which was specifically devoted to Tokelau.

Notes

[1] The information contained in the present paper has been derived from information provided to the Secretariat by the Permanent Mission of New Zealand to the United Nations in May 1998 and from the report of UNDP entitled "Country cooperation frameworks and related matters: first country cooperation framework for Tokelau (1998-2002)" (DP/CCF/TOK/1).

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United States Virgin Islands

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I. General

1. The United States Virgin Islands[1] are located in the eastern part of the Caribbean Sea, approximately 1,000 miles south-east of Miami and 45 miles east of Puerto Rico. The Territory is made up of three main islands (St. Croix, St. John, and St. Thomas) and one small island (Water Island) recently transferred to the jurisdiction of the territorial Government. The capital, Charlotte Amalie, is located on St. Thomas. The population was estimated at 109,662 in 1996.

II. Constitutional and political developments

2. In May 1998, the Territory's lawmakers adopted a measure to make the Territory's attorney-general an elected rather than an appointed position.[2] The Governor and the United States Congress must approve the measure before it goes into effect. The legislature also decided to reduce its membership from 15 to 9, in order to make economies.[3] This measure must also be approved by the Governor and the United States Congress.

3. In late 1996, the first phase of the transfer of Water Island from the jurisdiction of the United States Department of the Interior to the United States Virgin Islands began, following several years of negotiations on the property's future.

III. Military installations

4. Information on the administering Power's military installations in the Territory and defence force affiliations between the Territory and the administering Power is provided in a previous working paper prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.109/2076).

IV. Economic conditions

A. General

5. Gross Territorial Product (GTP) in 1996 was $1.34 billion, and per capita income was around $12,000. While unemployment increased in the first six months of 1997, a number of public works and private construction projects that began in 1997 were expected to add approximately 1,000 jobs to the economy.[4]

6. The territorial Government continues to pursue measures to diversify the economy, establish a solid revenue base and reduce its reliance on ad hoc disbursements from the administering Power. To this end, priorities have been to expand the tourism industry, attract small and medium-sized manufacturers and to develop a market for financial services.

B. Public finance

7. In mid-1998 the territorial Government was approximately $600 million in debt. The Territory owed about $130 million to the administering Power, much of it to the Federal Emergency Management Agency for repayment of loans following the hurricanes of 1995, which caused around $2 billion worth of damage. The Government was also in arrears in paying vendors, workers and personal income tax refunds. At the end of the 1997 fiscal year (September) the Government owed over $70 million in tax refunds and was $27 million short of its regular spending on government services.[5]

C. Agriculture, livestock and fisheries

8. A number of local and federal programmes provide assistance for agricultural development. Under an agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture, a Rural Development Loan Fund provides direct loans up to $99,500. The Small Business Development Agency provides direct loans of up to $10,000 for licensed farmers and fishermen. The Farmers Home Administration guarantees up to 90 per cent of bank loans for land, equipment, buildings and operating expenses.

9. During 1997, semen and embryos of the Senepol breed of cattle, developed on St. Croix, were exported to Australia and Paraguay. Sorghum, fruit and vegetables (including hydroponically-grown lettuce), the main products of the Territory's small agricultural sector, were grown for home consumption.

D. Industry

10. Manufacturing incentives are provided by a trade regime which confers unique advantages on the United States Virgin Islands. Items assembled in the Territory can be exported duty free into the United States, even if up to 70 per cent of its value consists of foreign dutiable components.

Other incentives include 90 per cent exemption from local corporate income taxes for 10 to 15 years for new manufacturers. Goods manufactured for export include watches, textiles, electronics, pharmaceuticals and rum. Over 30 large corporations have set up manufacturing operations in the Territory and industrial parks are under construction.

11. The industrial sector is dominated by the Hess Oil Refinery (St. Croix), one of the largest in the Western hemisphere, which employs 2,000 workers. Over the past seven years, the refinery has accumulated $1.1 billion in losses. The refinery currently operates at 400,000 barrels per day, 55 per cent of its capacity of 728,000 barrels per day. In May 1998, legislators of the United States Virgin Islands approved a $625 million joint venture between Hess Oil Virgin Islands and Petróleos de Venezuela S.A. The deal must be approved by the Governor and the United States Congress before it comes into effect. The state-owned Venezuelan company has agreed to pay $625 million for a 50 per cent stake in the facility. Under the joint venture, a $550 million deep-conversion "coker" will be built to process Venezuelan crude oil. This expansion is expected to create 1,500 construction jobs and will raise the property taxes of the refinery from the current $12 million to $14 million per year. The owner has said that he would close the refinery if the deal with Venezuela was not approved.[6]

12. A second major industrial facility is a rum distillery; excise taxes from United States Virgin Islands rum exported to the United States generates 15 per cent of the Territory's revenues. In 1997, a Spanish firm opened a micro-brewery in St. Croix. The brewery is expanding in order to cater to tourists, and there are plans to open a restaurant, bar, rum museum and a theatre.

E. Banking and insurance

13. United States banking legislation applies in the Territory. Further information on this sector is provided in a previous working paper prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.109/2076).

F. Trade

14. The Territory is exempt from the Jones Act, which requires that freight moving between United States ports be carried by United States-flagged ships. The island benefits from other favourable trade concessions (see para. 10 above) as part of its relationship with the administering Power.

G. Tourism

15. The tourism sector accounts for more than 60 per cent of GTP and employs around two thirds of the workforce. A Tourism Development Trust Fund has been created and will provide about $20 million for investments in gaming hotels. It is also expected to provide capital for malls, golf courses and trans-shipment facilities. For the first seven months of 1997, the number of cruise ship passengers travelling to the islands totalled 1 million (a 23 per cent increase from the same period in 1996). The largest resort complex in the Territory, Marriott's Frenchman's Reef, closed from April to December of 1997 for remodelling, repairs and expansion. The charter yacht industry earned $30 million in 1995. Industry experts maintain that there is a potential for earnings of $120 million. Experts also point to a large potential market in provisioning cruise ships where the Territory has a particular advantage, since ships do not have to pay longshoreman charges there (in 1995, the industry spent $77 million on Caribbean-supplied consumer goods).

16. In 1995, casino gambling was legalized in St. Croix, following a citizen's poll. Legislation permitting casino gambling is expected to increase the attraction of the islands to tourists. The Casino Control Commission reduced licensing and renewal fees to encourage the development of gaming hotels. A $37.4 million casino hotel, the Crowne Plaza Hotel and Casino, is now under construction.

H. Transportation, communication and basic facilities

17. The Islands have five major docking facilities. South Shore (St. Croix) is located near the St. Croix airport and industrial park, and handles lift-on/lift-off and roll-on/roll-off vessels. Gallows Bay (St. Croix) has a combined berthing space of 700 feet and a small roll-on/roll-off ramp. Frederiksted's (St. Croix) 5,216-foot port can berth two large cruise ships and two mini-cruise ships simultaneously and can accommodate naval submarines. Crown Bay (St. Thomas) has three cruise ship docks operated by the Virgin Island Port Authority, as well as a 900-foot wharf which can accommodate roll-on/roll-off cargo and container and break bulk operations. The West Indian Company bulkhead pier (St. Thomas) is privately operated, primarily for cruise ships. Two international airports, Cyril E. King Airport on St. Thomas and Alexander Hamilton Airport on St. Croix, are operated by the Port Authority. They have a combined annual passenger traffic count of over 2 million.

18. Electricity is thermally generated using imported fuels. The Water and Power Authority serves approximately 47,000 customers. Major generating facilities are located on St. Thomas and St. Croix, and a standby facility is located on St. John. Due to limited freshwater supplies, salt water is used extensively for non-domestic purposes, including firefighting and sewerage. The Water and Power Authority desalinates water and collects rainwater for domestic use. Wells, particularly on St. Croix, supply the remainder of the freshwater necessary.

19. Public works projects undertaken in 1997 include an $8.7 million wastewater plant on St. John, $3.7 million to pave roads on St. John and St. Thomas, and guardrail installation and culvert repair on the Melvin Evans Highway. Finally, the United States Federal Emergency Management Agency disbursed $30 million in 1997 to repair roofs destroyed in 1995's Hurricane Marilyn.

V. Social conditions

A. Labour

20. Mid-1997 figures put unemployment at slightly under 6 per cent.[7] Employers must follow United States Federal and United States Virgin Islands labour laws, such as minimum wage and hours, standards of safety and occupational health, and payment of social security and unemployment insurance.

B. Public health

21. The hospital in St. Thomas offers general service and has 157 beds. The hospital in St. Croix has 120 beds. There is also a 16-bed private hospital in St. Croix. Overall responsibility for the hospitals is held by the Department of Health.

C. Crime and crime prevention

22. The police force is administered by the Virgin Islands Government Department of Police. An Adult Correctional Facility is located on St. Croix. By United States standards, the United States Virgin Islands has one of the highest per capita murder rates.

D. Educational conditions

23. Education is compulsory and free for all children between 5½ to 16 years of age. There are 35 public schools. School enrolment for kindergarten up to the twelfth grade is estimated at 30,000. The University of the Virgin Islands has campuses on St. Thomas and St. Croix and provides courses in business administration, the humanities, social sciences and teacher education, and occupational courses in accounting, business management, secretarial administration, nursing, police science and administration.

VI. Future political status of the Territory

24. No significant action on the political status of the Territory has been taken since a referendum was held in 1993. In that ballot, 80.3 per cent of voters supported the existing status, 14.2 per cent voted for full integration with the United States, and 4.8 per cent voted for an end to United States sovereignty. Only 27.4 per cent of registered voters voted on the question, while the requirement for the referendum to be considered valid was 50 per cent.

A. Position of the territorial Government

25. At the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, the petitioner from the territorial Government noted that the current dependency arrangements between the Territory and the administering Power did not provide sufficient autonomy or equality for the removal of those Territories from the United Nations list of dependent territories. He further noted that the fact that the remaining small island Territories had not expressed a preference for immediate independence did not mean that their current arrangement was, by definition, self-governing.

26. Further information regarding the 1993 referendum on federal status and the future political status of the Territory can be found in previous working papers of the Secretariat (A/AC.109/1183, paras. 15 and 16, and A/AC.109/2014, para. 61).

B. Position of the administering Power

27. During deliberations of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, the administering Power recognized progress towards self-government in its Territories. It also

recognized that self-determination could not be reduced solely to the concept of full independence, but included a broader range of acceptable options, as long as these were the result of a free and informed choice by the people affected.

28. Further information concerning the position of the United States on the future status of the Territories it administers is contained in a previous working paper prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.109/2047, para. 39).

C. Action by the General Assembly

29. On 10 December 1997, the General Assembly adopted, without a vote, resolution 52/77 B, section XII of which concerns the United States Virgin Islands. In the resolution, the General Assembly, *inter alia*, welcomed the conclusion of the discussion between the Government of the Territory and the administering Power on the question of Water Island (see para. 3 above).

Notes

[1] The information contained in the present working paper was derived from published sources.

[2] AP, 6 May 1998.

[3] Ibid.

[4] *Virgin Islands Daily News*, 28 August 1977.

[5] Ibid., 4 September 1997.

[6] *Oil and Gas Journal*, 2 March 1998.

[7] *Virgin Islands Daily News*, 28 August 1997.

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Western Sahara

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I. General

1. A detailed account of general conditions and developments relating to Western Sahara was provided in a previous working paper on the Territory prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.109/2087).

2. During the period under review, intensive efforts were pursued to break the impasse which had persisted since December 1995 in the process of identifying prospective voters in the referendum in Western Sahara. These efforts included several rounds of direct talks between the two parties, namely, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO), on the United Nations plan for the settlement of the conflict of Western Sahara (hereinafter, the "settlement plan").[1] The direct talks, held under the auspices of the United Nations, concluded with the Houston agreements of 16 September 1997 and enabled the resumption of the identification operation on 3 December 1997.

II. Good offices of the Secretary-General

3. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 51/143 of 13 December 1996, the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session a report on the question of Western Sahara dated 26 September 1997 (A/52/364 and Add.1). The report reviewed the action taken in 1997 by the Secretary-General in the exercise of his good offices with the parties concerned, in close cooperation with the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the activities of the Acting Special Representative and the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General in consultation with the parties concerned, and the Secretary-General's report to the Security Council containing an analysis of the efforts pursued to break the deadlock in the identification process. Since that report, the Secretary-General, in close cooperation with the current Chairman of OAU, has continued to exercise his good offices with the parties concerned.

4. During the period under review, and pursuant to Council resolutions 1131 (1997) of 29 September 1997, 1133 (1997) of 20 October 1997 and 1148 (1998) of 26 January 1998, the Secretary-General presented four reports to the Security Council on the situation concerning Western Sahara (S/1997/742 and Add.1, S/1997/882 and Add.1, S/1998/35 and S/1998/316).

5. As indicated in the Secretary-General's report of 24 September 1997 (S/1997/742 and Add.1), following his exploratory visit to the mission area, the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. James A. Baker III, informed the Secretary-General that neither party had indicated any willingness to pursue any political solution other than implementation of the settlement plan. He advised that discussions with the two parties on the implementation of the plan would be necessary, but that the only way realistically to assess the possibilities for its implementation would be by arranging direct talks between them, under United Nations auspices. The Secretary-General decided therefore to invite the Government of Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO, as well as the two neighbouring countries, Algeria and Mauritania, to send high-level representatives to meet with his Personal Envoy in London, for separate consultations on that issue on 10 and 11 June 1997. Throughout the consultations and subsequent direct talks, Mr. Baker was assisted by the Secretary-General's Acting Special Representative, Mr. Erik Jensen, and by two deputies, Mr. Chester A. Crocker, former United States Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, and Mr. John R. Bolton, former United States Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations.

6. In London, the Personal Envoy informed each delegation of the conclusions he had reached following his exploratory visit to the mission area, and explained that direct talks between the two parties would be necessary in order to address the obstacles in the implementation of the settlement plan. The talks would be private, would not constitute an international conference and would continue for as long as the Personal Envoy felt that there was progress. Algeria and Mauritania, as observers, would be kept informed of developments, but would take part in the discussions only on issues directly affecting them. It was agreed with the two parties and the two observer countries that complete confidentiality would be maintained and that no issue would be considered as finally agreed until accord had been reached on all outstanding issues.

7. Under the ground rules set forth in London, four rounds of direct talks between the two parties were subsequently held under the auspices of the Personal Envoy in Lisbon (23 June), London (19-20 July), Lisbon (29-30 August) and Houston, Texas, United States of America (14-16 September).

8. The first official direct contact between Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO under United Nations auspices was held at Lisbon on 23 June 1997. The discussion started with the primary issue that had deadlocked the implementation of the settlement plan, namely, the identification of

applicants from three tribal groupings (listed as H41, H61 and J51/52 in the census conducted by the Spanish Administration of the Territory in 1974) whose links to the Territory were contested by the Frente POLISARIO. At the end of the first day, the Personal Envoy submitted a proposal to bridge the parties' differences in the identification process. Since both sides indicated that they needed to consult with their principals before responding to the proposal, the Lisbon meeting was adjourned on the second day. However, both parties gave their responses to the Personal Envoy within the following 48 hours.

9. This led to a second round of direct talks, held in London on 19 and 20 July 1997, during which a compromise agreement was reached on issues related to the identification of prospective voters. Under the agreement, the parties would not directly or indirectly sponsor or present for identification anyone from the above three tribal groupings other than persons included in the 1974 census and their immediate families, but the parties would not be obligated to prevent individuals from these groupings from presenting themselves. The parties also agreed, *inter alia*, that MINURSO should notify them of the results by number, but not by name, of the identification process to date. They further agreed that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) should begin the steps preparatory to the process of repatriation of refugees in accordance with the settlement plan.

10. During the third round of direct talks, held in Lisbon on 29 and 30 August 1997, agreement was reached on issues related to the confinement of Moroccan and Frente POLISARIO forces. The parties agreed that the Moroccan armed forces would be reduced and confined strictly in accordance with the provisions of the settlement plan. The parties, as well as Algeria and Mauritania, also agreed to a compromise proposed by the Personal Envoy on the outstanding issue of the confinement of Frente POLISARIO forces. These forces would be confined in locations and numbers designated by the Special Representative as called for in the settlement plan, provided, however, that no more than 2,000 individuals would be confined on the Territory of Western Sahara east of the sand berm and no more than 300 in Mauritania. Frente POLISARIO forces over and above the number designated by the Special Representative for confinement in Western Sahara east of the berm and in Mauritania would be confined in Algeria. The locations for troop confinement in Algeria and Mauritania would be identified in coordination with Algerian and Mauritanian authorities. It was further agreed that this compromise would in no way alter or otherwise affect the internationally recognized boundaries of Western Sahara. During the Lisbon talks, the two parties also reaffirmed their commitment to the provisions of the settlement plan with regard to the release of prisoners of war and of political detainees, and agreed to cooperate fully to that effect with the International Committee of the Red Cross and with the Independent Jurist.

11. At the conclusion of the fourth round of direct talks, held at Houston, Texas, from 14 to 16 September 1997, Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO reached agreement on the code of conduct for the referendum campaign and on an important declaration relating to the authority of the United Nations during the transitional period. They also agreed on a set of practical measures for the resumption of the identification process.

12. In his report of 24 September 1997, the Secretary-General observed that, with the agreements reached, and the goodwill and spirit of cooperation shown during the talks, the main contentious issues that had impeded the implementation of the settlement plan had been satisfactorily addressed. He concluded that these achievements created the conditions to proceed towards the full implementation of the plan. He expressed the hope, however, that the two parties, as well as the two observer countries, would be as cooperative in implementing the agreements as they had been in reaching them. He emphasized that, ultimately, it was only the genuine commitment of the parties to the settlement plan and the agreements reached in the direct talks that would determine whether it was possible to fulfil the objectives of the plan. On that basis, he recommended that MINURSO proceed with the implementation of the plan, starting with the resumption and completion of the identification process. He indicated that, should this recommendation meet with the approval of the Security Council, he would dispatch a technical team to the mission area in October 1997 to reassess the resource requirements for the full deployment of MINURSO.

13. On 13 November 1997, pursuant to Security Council resolution 1133 (1997), and as indicated in his report of 24 September (S/1997/742), the Secretary-General submitted to the Council a comprehensive report (S/1997/882), including a detailed plan, a timetable and financial implications for the holding of the referendum for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in accordance with the settlement plan and the agreements reached between the parties for its implementation. According to that timetable, the identification of applicants to the referendum was expected to be completed by 31 May 1998, the transitional period was to start on 7 June 1998 (D-Day) and the referendum was to be held on 7 December 1998.

14. The Secretary-General's report of 13 November 1997, as well as his letter of 13 December 1997 to the President of the Security Council (S/1997/974), also provided an account of developments in the implementation of various provisions of the settlement plan, including the preparatory work undertaken by MINURSO to ensure the resumption of the identification operation by 1 December 1997. Extensive discussions were held by the Acting Special Representative with the parties, both of which reiterated their commitment to resuming identification expeditiously and to proceeding in accordance with the practical measures agreed to during the fourth round of direct talks. During these discussions, the parties were informed of MINURSO's plan to open 12 centres, 9 of which would operate concurrently. The list of sheikhs eligible to testify was updated and arrangements were made for selecting and agreeing in advance to a list of alternates. With respect to the convocation lists, both parties were granted a week to check the applicants' current addresses and a maximum of three weeks to ensure that people were notified, wherever they may be. Identification files stored in the United Nations Office at Geneva were returned to Laayoune in late October, requirements for the initial reopening of four identification centres were assessed and arrangements were made with the parties to have the centres restored to full working order. Following these preparatory activities, MINURSO resumed the identification operation on 3 December 1997 as planned.

15. On 26 December 1997 (S/1997/1023), the Secretary-General informed the Security Council of his intention to appoint Mr. Charles F. Dunbar (United States of America) as his Special Representative for Western Sahara, to which the Council agreed (see the letter from its President addressed to the Secretary-General on 30 December 1997, S/1997/1024).

16. In his report of 15 January 1998 (S/1998/35), the Secretary-General indicated that, during identification sessions at Laayoune for members of tribal groupings H41, H61 and J51/52, and at Camps Smara and Dakhla in the Tindouf area for members of tribal groups J51/52, 3,927 unconvoked individuals presented themselves at Laayoune and 495 in the Tindouf area; and in succeeding days, 8,613 individuals, mostly from grouping H61, also came forward at Laayoune. The Frente POLISARIO protested that Morocco was in breach of the Houston agreements with respect to the sponsorship of non-convoked individuals. In consultation with his Personal Envoy and in conformity with the Houston agreements, the Secretary-General decided to instruct MINURSO to proceed as soon as possible with the identification of those unconvoked individuals who had presented themselves on the days of convocation of their respective tribal groups. He also decided that, for applicants from "non-contested" tribes resident in northern Morocco, identification sessions initially scheduled to take place in Tan Tan and Goulemine in southern Morocco should be held at two northern locations where the number of resident applicants exceeded 10,000, that is, El Kelaa des Sraghna and Sidi Kacem.

17. Mr. Dunbar, in a letter to the President of the Security Council dated 19 February 1998 (S/1998/142), the Secretary-General informed the Council that his newly appointed Special Representative, Mr. Dunbar, arrived in the mission area on 9 February 1998. In Rabat, he was received by His Majesty the King of Morocco and senior officials of the Government of Morocco, and in the Tindouf area, by the Secretary-General of the Frente POLISARIO and other leaders. He also met with the Algerian authorities in Algiers and intended to proceed to Nouakchott shortly to meet with the Mauritanian authorities. Interruptions in the identification process occurred, due to the illness of sheikhs, sandstorms, disputes between the parties, and a change in procedures at the Laayoune airport for arriving and departing POLISARIO delegations, which was followed by a reciprocal change at the Tindouf airport for Moroccan delegations. These interruptions and other factors led to a perceptible increase in tension between the two parties. Some reservations were expressed by the parties regarding the Secretary-General's decisions contained in his report of 15 January (S/1998/35), concerning the centres in Morocco and the identification of tribal groups H41, H61 and J51/52.

18. In his report of 13 April 1998 (S/1998/316), the Secretary-General indicated that, while the total number of persons identified had reached 101,772, it was unlikely that the 31 May 1998 target date for completing the identification process could be met. The delay was due to the slowdown in identification activities in February and March and to the lack of progress in resolving the issue of the identification of applicants from the above-mentioned three tribal groups. In addition, the climate of mutual distrust did not facilitate the task of MINURSO. In the Secretary-General's view, the months of May and June would be crucial for determining whether the identification of all applicants that remained to be convoked could be completed by the end of July 1998 and whether a solution could be found to the problem of those three groups. If, by the end of June, sufficient progress had been made in the identification process and in the search for solutions to the contentious issue of these groups, in his next report to the Security Council he would submit recommendations for a revised timetable for the full implementation of the settlement plan, including preparatory measures for the establishment of the Referendum

Commission. If, on the contrary, no solution had been found to the problem of the three "contested" groups, and if a large number of applicants from "non-contested" tribes also remained to be identified, the Secretary-General would recommend that the Security Council reconsider the viability of the mandate of MINURSO.

III. Consideration by the Security Council

19. The Security Council considered the reports of the Secretary-General (S/1997/742 and Add.1, S/1997/882 and Add.1, S/1998/35 and S/1998/316) and took the following action:

20. On 29 September 1997, at its 3821st meeting, the Security Council adopted resolution 1131 (1997), the operative part of which reads:

> "1. *Decides* to extend the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 20 October 1997, in accordance with the recommendation of the Secretary-General contained in his report;
>
> "2. *Welcomes* the other recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General of 25 September 1997 and *expresses* its readiness to consider further action in accordance with these recommendations;
>
> "3. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter."

21. On 20 October 1997, at its 3825th meeting, the Security Council adopted resolution 1133 (1997), the operative part of which reads:

> "1. *Calls upon* the parties to continue their constructive cooperation with the United Nations by fully implementing the settlement plan and the agreements which they have reached for its implementation;
>
> "2. *Decides* to extend the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 20 April 1998, in order that MINURSO may proceed with its identification tasks, and to increase its size in accordance with the recommendation of the Secretary-General contained in his report;
>
> "3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to begin the identification of eligible voters in accordance with the settlement plan and the agreements reached between the parties with the aim of finishing the process by 31 May 1998;
>
> "4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the Council, no later than 15 November 1997, a comprehensive report, including a detailed plan, a timetable and financial implications, for the holding of the referendum for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in accordance with the settlement plan and the agreements reached between the parties for its implementation;
>
> "5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Council every 60 days from the date of extension of the mandate of MINURSO on the progress of the implementation of the settlement plan and the agreements reached between the parties, and to keep the Council regularly informed of all significant developments in the interim period;
>
> "6. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter."

22. On 26 January 1998, at its 3849th meeting, the Security Council adopted resolution 1148 (1998), the operative part of which reads:

> "1. *Approves* the deployment of the engineering unit required for demining activities and of the additional administrative staff required to support the deployment of military personnel, as proposed in annex II to the report of the Secretary-General of 13 November 1997;
>
> "2. *Expresses* its intention to consider positively the request for the remaining additional military and civilian police assets for MINURSO as proposed in annex II to the report of the Secretary-General of 13 November 1997, as soon as the Secretary-General reports that the identification process has reached a stage which makes the deployment of these assets essential;
>
> "3. *Calls upon* both parties to cooperate with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and to cooperate further with the Identification Commission established pursuant to the settlement plan in order that the identification process can be completed in a timely fashion in accordance with the settlement plan and the agreements reached between the parties for its implementation;
>
> "4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to keep the Security Council fully informed of further developments in the implementation of the settlement plan;
>
> "5. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter."

23. On 17 April 1998, at its 3873rd meeting, the Security Council adopted resolution 1163 (1998), the operative part of which reads:

"1. *Decides* to extend the mandate of MINURSO until 20 July 1998, in order that MINURSO may proceed with its identification tasks, with the aim of completing the process;

"2. *Calls upon* the parties to cooperate constructively with the United Nations, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Identification Commission established pursuant to the settlement plan in order to complete the identification of voters phase of the settlement plan and the agreements reached for its implementation;

"3. *Notes* the continuing deployment of the engineering units required for demining activities and of the administrative staff required to support the deployment of military personnel as proposed in annex II to the report of the Secretary-General of 13 November 1997 (S/1997/882), as further described in the recommendations of the report of the Secretary-General of 13 April 1998;

"4. *Expresses again* its intention to consider positively the request for the remaining additional military and police assets for MINURSO as proposed in annex II to the report of the Secretary-General of 13 November 1997, as soon as the Secretary-General reports that the identification process has reached a stage which makes the deployment of these assets essential;

"5. *Calls upon* the Governments of Morocco, Algeria, and Mauritania to conclude respective status-of-forces agreements with the Secretary-General, and *recalls* that pending the conclusion of such agreements, the model status-of-forces agreement dated 9 October 1990 (A/45/594), as provided for in General Assembly resolution 52/12 B, should apply provisionally;

"6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Council every 30 days from the date of extension of the mandate of MINURSO on the progress of the implementation of the settlement plan and the agreements reached between the parties, and to keep the Council regularly informed of all significant developments in the interim period, and, as appropriate, on the continuing viability of the mandate of MINURSO;

"7. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter."

IV. Consideration by the General Assembly

24. At the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, reference was made to the question of Western Sahara by a number of representatives in their statements during the general debate.

25. At its 2nd meeting, on 30 September 1997, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) of the General Assembly decided to hold a general debate covering agenda item 18, entitled "Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples", including the question of Western Sahara. During its consideration of this question, the Committee had before it, *inter alia*, the report of the Secretary-General (A/52/364 and Add.1), submitted in accordance with its resolution 51/143 of 13 December 1996.

26. At its 5th meeting, on 9 October 1997, the Fourth Committee heard four petitioners on the question of Western Sahara, among them, the representative of the Frente POLISARIO (A/C.4/52/SR.5). In his statement, the latter pointed out that, after the dangerous impasse that had deadlocked the peace process in Western Sahara, new perspectives had emerged. There were solid reasons to believe that the international community had before it a real possibility of bringing an end to the decolonization conflict in Western Sahara in a just and definitive matter. The Secretary-General's decision to designate Mr. James Baker III as his Personal Envoy to the Western Sahara and to entrust him with the task of breaking the deadlock had been welcomed by the Frente POLISARIO which was reaffirming its willingness to cooperate to ensure that Mr. Baker's mission would be successful. As a result of the direct talks between Morocco and Frente POLISARIO, both parties had reached agreements capable of overcoming the problems that had thus far prevented, or could prevent in the future, the implementation of the Peace Plan.

27. The progress achieved towards placing the referendum of Western Sahara on a correct course was tangible. The previous deadlock was replaced by a new and positive dynamic, which could and must culminate in a referendum of unquestionable credibility for the Sahrawi people and thus, for the international community. Achievements such as these had been goals of the Special Committee of 24, and therefore of the Fourth Committee, for the past 30 years. The two bodies should feel encouraged because after their perseverance in following the decolonization process in Western Sahara, especially during its most difficult moments, tangible results may finally be borne.

28. At this crucial moment, the United Nations and OAU had the historical duty to spare no effort so that the accords jointly achieved by the Frente POLISARIO and Morocco themselves, strongly motivated by this Committee's perseverance and the mediation of a prestigious statesman, may become solid ground for a new dynamic that nothing and no one should stop before its just and definitive conclusion.

29. At the 7th meeting of the Committee on 13 October 1997, the Permanent Representative of Morocco said that Morocco had not requested that petitioners be heard. It could have asked escapees from the Hamada camp to describe to the Committee their tribulations during years of imprisonment, destitution and deprivation. Morocco had assumed that, after the talks in Lisbon, London and Houston which Mr. Baker had helped to broker, a new phase had begun and that the other side would be pleased to see an end to the stalemate (referred to in the Secretary-General's report of November 1995), which it itself had created.

30. Although the petitioners had spoken about the Spanish census in 1974, what they had not said was that it had been confirmed during the Houston negotiations that the census was only one eligibility criterion among others. The petitioners had also referred in part to the well-known phenomenon of the exodus of populations to the north, but said nothing whatsoever about the eyewitness testimony of those responsible for operation "Ecouvillon" in 1958, during which, as indicated in "Combats Sahraouis", written by Mr. Patrick Reneau, some 40,000 Saharans had fled to the north. There had been no mention of one undisputable fact, namely, that the combatants, hounded by two armies also using aircraft, had had no choice but to head north. Mauritania, to the south, had not yet won its independence, nor had Algeria, to the east.

31. In order to facilitate the resumption of the referendum process, Morocco had agreed, at the invitation of the Secretary-General and with the intervention of Mr. Baker, to contact the current representatives of part of the Saharan population held in the Hamada camps. Morocco had participated in the Lisbon, London and Houston talks, which had clarified the points in the settlement plan. Morocco was of the view that, thanks to the work of Mr. Baker, there could no longer be any question about the clearly defined rules on the right of the Saharans to be registered where they were; Morocco was convinced that the clarifications made on the other objectives of the plan and its components, including the problems of troop confinement refugees and prisoners, as well as the code of conduct, would be respected by both sides.

32. As in the past, Morocco would continue to cooperate with MINURSO to organize a referendum. The referendum would prove that the Moroccan identity of the Sahara was not only a juridical and historical expression, but also reflected the attachment of part of the Moroccan people to the nation, its kingdom and its King.

33. Although the Moroccan delegation was convinced that the matter was exclusively one for the Security Council, it had worked to facilitate the drafting of a compromise text. It would explain its position when it came to considering the draft resolution on the issue.

34. At the 4th meeting of the Committee on 8 October 1997, the Permanent Representative of Algeria said that in Western Sahara, where a proud and brave people had been claiming for more than 20 years its right to self-determination, a new dynamic had recently been put in motion after years of deadlock. The appointment by the Secretary-General of Mr. James A. Baker III as his Personal Envoy had contributed greatly to the initiation of the process. The progress achieved by the Kingdom of Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO during five rounds of direct talks had enabled global agreement to be reached on the pending issues that had prevented the settlement plan from being implemented. The two parties had also confirmed their commitment to cooperate with the United Nations, which was required by the settlement plan to organize and conduct a referendum that was free from all constraints both for participants and for accredited observers. The General Assembly should remain vigilant and continue to play a pivotal role by backing the implementation of the settlement plan and giving political and moral support to the Security Council and the Secretary-General in their efforts to hold the long-awaited referendum for self-determination as soon as possible.

35. Algeria, in its capacity as neighbouring country and official observer, would continue to give the Secretary-General and his Special Representative strong support in their efforts to implement the settlement plan and the agreements reached in Houston. The peace process in Western Sahara had reached a decisive point. The Committee and the General Assembly should therefore take note of the developments that had taken place and reaffirm the responsibility of the United Nations towards the people of Western Sahara and their support for the efforts of the Secretary-General for the implementation of the settlement plan. They should also urge the Kingdom of Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO to continue at the same level of cooperation and to comply with their commitments. The people of the Maghreb hoped that the parties would sincerely

implement the agreements reached in Houston and that peace and concord would prevail in the region.

36. At its 9th meeting, on 27 October 1997, the Committee adopted without a vote draft resolution A/C.4/52/L.5 entitled "Question of Western Sahara". A detailed account of the Committee's consideration of this item at the fifty-second session of the General Assembly is provided in the related report of the Committee to the Assembly (A/52/613).

37. At the same meeting, following the adoption of the draft resolution, the Permanent Representative of Morocco said that Morocco had always considered Western Sahara to be an integral part of its territory and had, since independence, been attempting to recover it, including with the assistance of the United Nations. While maintaining his delegation's traditional reservations about the jurisdiction of the United Nations and the framework of the discussions, he supported the draft resolution and would continue to cooperate fully with the United Nations in implementing the settlement plan.

38. On 10 December 1997, on the recommendation of the Fourth Committee, the General Assembly adopted, without a vote, resolution 52/75 entitled "Question of Western Sahara", the operative part of which reads:

"1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;

"2. *Takes note with satisfaction* of the agreements reached between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro for the implementation of the settlement plan during their private direct talks under the auspices of Mr. James Baker III, the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, and urges the parties to implement those agreements fully and faithfully;

"3. *Urges* the two parties to continue their cooperation with the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy and to refrain from undertaking anything that would undermine the implementation of the settlement plan and the agreements reached for its implementation;

"4. *Commends* the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy for their efforts in reaching these agreements as well as the two parties for the cooperation they have shown, and urges them to continue this cooperation in order to facilitate the speedy implementation of the settlement plan;

"5. *Reaffirms* the responsibility of the United Nations towards the people of Western Sahara, as provided for in the settlement plan;

"6. *Reiterates its support* for further efforts of the Secretary-General for the organization and the supervision by the United Nations, in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity, of a referendum for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, in conformity with Security Council resolutions 658 (1990) and 690 (1991), by which the Council approved the settlement plan for Western Sahara;

"7. *Takes note* of Security Council resolution 1131 (1997);

"8. *Requests* the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples to continue to consider the situation in Western Sahara, bearing in mind the positive ongoing implementation of the settlement plan, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session;

"9. *Invites* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session a report on the implementation of the present resolution."

V. Other developments

39. On 27 March 1998, the Commission on Human Rights approved without a vote a resolution on the question of Western Sahara, in which it took note with satisfaction of the agreements reached between the parties, during their direct private talks under the auspices of James Baker III and urged them to implement those agreements fully and continue their cooperation with the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy. The parties were also urged "to refrain from undertaking anything that would undermine the implementation of the settlement plan and the agreements reached for its implementation".

Notes

[1] See *Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-fifth Year, Supplement for April, May and June 1990*, document S/21360; and ibid., *Forty-sixth Year, Supplement for April, May and June 1991*, document S/22464.

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Dissemination of information on decolonization during the period from May 1997 to June 1998

Report of the Department of Public Information

A. Introduction

1. At its fifty-second session, the General Assembly, in paragraph 3 of its resolution 52/79 of 10 December 1997 entitled "Dissemination of information on decolonization", requested the Department of Public Information to give publicity to the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization. The present report covers the activities undertaken by the Department of Public Information during the period from May 1997 to June 1998.

2. The Department's multimedia activities covered a wide range of issues pertaining to decolonization. It also continued to provide coverage with regard to the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (1990-2000). The adoption of resolution 52/79 was highlighted by the Department's daily news programmes for broadcasting organizations worldwide and received emphasis in its press release service.

B. Press

3. The Department issued a total of 180 press releases in English and French on issues relating to decolonization as part of its regular coverage of United Nations activities. They related to the work of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and of the General Assembly. The press releases were made available to the news media and were distributed electronically to United Nations information centres and services and were posted on the United Nations home page of the World Wide Web. Posters, pamphlets and other relevant materials were furnished to journalists upon request.

4 The Department made arrangements through the United Nations Development Programme for a press officer to be assigned to cover the Pacific Regional Seminar, held in Nadi, Fiji, from 16 to 18 June 1998.

5. With regard to paragraph 3 of resolution 52/79 and its reference to the Internet, a total of 628 documents on decolonization are now available at the United Nations Web site.

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C. Publications

6. The *UN Chronicle*, a quarterly magazine of the United Nations, regularly covered major developments in the field of decolonization, including the work of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) of the General Assembly (No. 1, 1998), and published an article entitled "The United Nations and the New World Agenda", by Robert F. Van Lierop, former Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Vanuatu to the United Nations, now a practising lawyer in New York (No. 1, 1997).

7. The forthcoming revised edition of *Basic Facts* will contain an updated chapter on the activities and achievements of the United Nations in the area of decolonization.

8. During the period under review, a comprehensive overview of decolonization issues was prepared for publication in two editions of the *Yearbook of the United Nations*, the regular edition covering the year 1995 (30 pages) and the backlog edition for 1989 (30 pages). The 1996 edition will also give comprehensive coverage of decolonization issues.

D. Radio and Central News Service

9. During the reporting period, the Radio and Central News Service covered various issues concerning decolonization and related issues in news bulletins, weekly current affairs magazines and weekly regional magazine programmes. They were produced in official and non-official languages for worldwide dissemination. The programmes dealt with self-determination, self-determination of the United States Virgin Islands, violent incidents in East Timor, Nobel Peace Prize co-winner Jose Ramos Horta's call for cessation of all armed activities in East Timor, environmental issues in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, the decisions of the Special Committee concerning the remaining Territories in the Caribbean, the need to assist the Territories to attain sustained economic growth and social advancement, the call of the Special Committee for political education programmes on the Territories, the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Western Sahara, the question of relocation of people in Montserrat owing to volcanic eruption and the question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

10. In addition, the Service produced five feature programmes on decolonization and related issues in various languages, namely, "Women in the Resistance Movement: East Timor" (English), "Puerto Rico's Future" (Spanish), "Ramos Horta: A Nobel Peace Prize Winner on East Timor" (Portuguese), "East Timor: A Political Situation" (Portuguese), and "Portugal and Indonesia: Negotiating East Timor" (Portuguese).

11. On the occasion of the special meeting marking the observance of the Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of All Colonial Territories Fighting for Freedom, Independence and Human Rights, held at Headquarters on 22 May 1998, the Service organized two interviews, one with the Chief Minister of Montserrat, the Honourable David Brandt, and one with the Acting Chairman of the Special Committee, Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla.

E. Television/video

12. During the reporting period, activities within the United Nations system related to decolonization were televised and disseminated through feeds and dubs made available to networks and other television stations and through packages of television news and video highlights provided to international news syndicators. The Department's audio/visual library continued to make tapes and cassettes available to correspondents, delegates, United Nations radio producers and outside producers on decolonization issues.

F. United Nations information centres

13. Throughout the year, United Nations information centres around the world contributed to disseminating information on decolonization in the context of promoting a better public understanding of the work of the Organization. The Information Centres in Jakarta and Lisbon provided logistical and information support to the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for East Timor on his visits to Indonesia and Portugal, respectively. The Centre in Lisbon also assisted the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy to Western Sahara with information and logistical support on the Envoy's visit to Portugal. On the question of Puerto Rico, the Information Centre in Washington, D.C., presented the United Nations perspective in response to an article published in a local non-governmental organization publication.

G. Non-governmental organizations/public inquiries

14. To promote awareness among the non-governmental organization community of United Nations activities on decolonization, the Department continued to disseminate information materials to each of the 1,550 non-governmental organizations associated with it. The Public Inquiries Unit responded to 160 queries and complied with requests made for information on decolonization through the dispatch of materials such as handouts, publications, pamphlets, booklets and brochures. The Unit responded to many inquiries through e-mail.